

Project Summary

Title: “A Farmer Education and Demonstration Program for Biofuel Feedstock Production in Alabama”

Conducted by: Auburn University – Dr. David Bransby and Dr. Carla Shoemaker

The objective of this project is to conduct demonstrations and educational activities to instruct farmers on how to grow non-traditional energy crops for biofuel production. A seminar for county extension agents and three field days for farmers and county extension agents will be held providing information and instruction on energy crop production, harvesting and transport, and bioenergy in general. In conjunction with the field days and through county agents and additional meetings as necessary, farmers will be recruited and signed up to supply feedstock to Alabama's first cellulosic biofuel production facility. In addition, five to ten farmers will be identified to plant and establish 10-acre test plots of Alamo switchgrass. Another phase of the project will involve the establishment, demonstration and evaluation of low input alternative energy crops (sugarcane, sweet sorghum, turnips, sugar beets, cassava, and sweet potatoes) for small scale biofuel production. Biofuel conversion equipment will be tested and data collected on the conversion of various crops to biofuel. These components will then be integrated into a total system approach and evaluated on an economic basis for the small scale production of biofuel on farms in Alabama. Byproducts from the conversion process will be utilized to assess palatability and growth performance of livestock.